

Radiology Associates of Ithaca

"YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD RADIOLOGISTS PRACTICING WORLD CLASS IMAGING"
101 Dates Drive, Ithaca, New York 14850

Myelogram

What is the test? A myelogram examines the spinal cord and canal for injury or disease. Using a contrast media, which is injected into the spinal cord with a needle, a radiologist records images with a special camera called a fluoroscope. In some cases, a myelogram may be followed by computerized axial tomography (CAT scan).

How do I prepare? Please talk to your doctor prior to the myelogram. It is important that your doctor and radiologist are aware of all of your medications, because there are several prescriptions and over-the-counter medications that should not be taken before having a myelogram. Also, please notify your doctor if you are pregnant. Unless you are advised otherwise, you may take your usual morning medications on the day of the exam. Do not eat solid food after midnight before your myelogram. On the morning of the procedure, until two hours before the exam, you may drink clear liquids, such as water, clear juices, broth, soft drinks, or tea, but not coffee. Do not drink or eat anything 2 hours prior to your procedure. Please make arrangements to have someone drive you home afterwards.

What can I expect during the procedure? Plan to arrive at outpatient registration 30 minutes before your appointment. A nurse will take your medical history and assist you into a hospital gown. During the myelogram, you will be asked to lie on an x-ray table, on your stomach. The radiologist will inject a local anesthetic into your lower back, which may cause a stinging sensation. After the area is numb, the contrast media will be injected into your spinal canal through another needle. This may cause a feeling of pressure. At this point, x-ray films are taken; you may be moved into different positions on the table to get a variety of views. This test takes approximately 60 minutes.

After the test? You'll be taken to a patient observation area where you can rest quietly in bed with your head elevated. Periodically, a nurse will take your temperature, blood pressure and pulse, and offer you fluids to drink. Under normal circumstances, you should be able to leave the medical center five or six hours after the myelogram.

How and when will I get my test results? Typically, within 48 hours a written report of your test results will be sent to your referring physician, who will review them with you. Additional time (3 to 5 days) may be required if we are comparing these test results to previous findings from another hospital or health-care provider.

Where is this test performed? Myelograms are performed at Cayuga Medical Center at 101 Dates Drive, off NYS Route 96 in Ithaca.